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ABSTRACT

Sociopragmatic ambiguity (SPA) is claimed here to differ from other, better-known types of ambiguity, in terms of its locus, cause, and effect. SPA is characteristic of whole-discourse features rather than of lexical items or phrases. The ambiguity is one of social rather than ideational or semantic meaning. It is claimed that SPA arises through an identifiable interaction between two maxims (confluence), in which two maxims enjoin the same speaker behavior. Two examples are discussed. The first, choice of code in intercultural conversations, represents a situation where more than one choice of maxim is available; when it is not obvious to the hearer which maxim lies behind that choice, SPA results. The second instance is the choice of second person pronoun (e.g., "tu/vous"), a well-known example of SPA that can also be explained as arising through maxim confluence. Contains 17 references. (Author/MSE)

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WHERE DOES SOCIOPRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY COME FROM?

Susan Meredith Burt

Sociopragmatic ambiguity (SPA) is claimed here to differ from other, better known types of ambiguity, in terms of its locus, cause, and effect. SPA is characteristic of whole-discourse features rather than of lexical items or phrases. The ambiguity is one of social rather than ideational or semantic meaning. The paper will claim that SPA arises via an identifiable interaction between two maxims, which I will call confluence, in which two maxims each enjoin the same speaker behavior. Two examples will be discussed: 1) the choice of language in a situation where more than one is available is a case where each choice has two potential social messages, and 2) the choice between address pronouns (such as *tu/vous*) is similarly sociopragmatically ambiguous because of maxim confluence.

INTRODUCTION: TYPES OF AMBIGUITIES AND THEIR ETIOLOGIES

Because ambiguous sentences can reveal important characteristics of lexical items and syntactic constructions, introductory linguistics texts teach students to distinguish between different types of ambiguities, and to understand the different explanations for them. Most linguists are familiar with examples like:

(1) Chris and Kim met by the bank.

which is ambiguous because of the homonyms *bank* (of a river) and *bank* (financial institution). There is a difference between such cases of *lexical ambiguity* and cases of *structural ambiguity*, ambiguity that arises because a sentence or constituent can be parsed in more than one way. A classic example of the latter *is*:

(2) The book was about old men and women.

where the scope of *old* may or may not include *women*, and the sentence is therefore ambiguous.

Recently, researchers such as Horn (1985) and Sweetser (1990) have investigated a third kind of ambiguity, *pragmatic ambiguity*, which is characteristic of grammatical functors such as the negative particle or modal auxiliaries. Horn (1985) defines pragmatic ambiguity as "a built-in duality of use" (p. 122), and shows, for example, that *not* can be used both for ordinary negation, as in (3a) and for metalinguistic negation as in (3b):

(3) a. I didn't manage to solve the problem--and I failed the exam.
b. I didn't *manage* to solve the problem--it was easy!

where the speaker of (3b) negates not the content of the proposition, but the lexical choice of the putative earlier utterance.

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In contrast with these types of ambiguity, in which specific structures or lexical items are the source of the ambiguity, this paper will concentrate on defining and explaining the cause of a fourth type of ambiguity, *sociopragmatic ambiguity*. Sociopragmatic ambiguity (or SPA) does not result from choosing certain lexical items or structures, but inheres in global discourse choices such as choice of a code or choice of an address pronoun (or title). Furthermore, the ambiguity is not between ideational meanings as is the case with lexical, structural or pragmatic ambiguity, but between different possible social intentions on the part of the speaker. However, like pragmatic ambiguity, sociopragmatic ambiguity can be characterized as arising because a certain choice between possible forms (to use a word like *manage*, as in the case of pragmatic ambiguity above, or to use one language rather than another) has the potential for a duality of use. More important, from the hearer's point of view, an utterance characterized by sociopragmatic ambiguity has the potential for a duality of interpretation. One example of sociopragmatic ambiguity, that of code choice in intercultural conversations, will be discussed in the following section. After giving evidence that the act of choosing a code can be sociopragmatically ambiguous, I will show that sociopragmatic ambiguity comes about because of a new relationship between pragmatic maxims--not a violation, flout, clash or opting out--but what I call a *confluence* of maxims: more than one maxim can enjoin the speaker to make a certain linguistic choice. When it is not obvious to the hearer which maxim lies behind that choice, sociopragmatic ambiguity results. Then, to show that this example is not a unique case, the third section of the paper will discuss second person pronoun choice, a well-known example of SPA that I will show can also be explained as arising through maxim confluence. The reanalysis of the familiar *tu-vous* choice problem shows how Scotton's (1983) expansion of Gricean theory has increased the explanatory power of that pragmatic framework.

THE SOCIOPRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY OF CODE CHOICE

Sociopragmatic ambiguity can occur in an intercultural situation when two people meet, each a learner of the other's native language. In this situation, it is not immediately obvious which language a speaker should choose because any choice will be sociopragmatically ambiguous. Let us look at examples, first imaginary, and then real, that show this.

Imagine that a native speaker of German, who is learning English, encounters a native speaker of English who speaks some German. When they meet for the first time, the English speaker may decide to speak German to the German speaker, who is likely to react in one of two ways: she may think,

(4) "How wonderful! An American who speaks German and is willing to do so!"

(this, of course, is what the English speaker hopes she will think). But equally possible is that she will think,

(5) "That arrogant woman! Does she think my English is not good enough for a conversation with her?"

As I will show, there is good pragmatic justification for either of these reactions. Suppose, on the other hand, the English speaker (E) decides to speak English to the German speaker (G). Again, G may react in either of two ways:

(6) "How wonderful! A real native speaker is speaking English to me!"

or G might react,

(7) "Typical American! She expects everybody to speak English! Probably doesn't know a word of German besides *Gesundheit*.. "

Again, there is pragmatic justification for either reaction.

Let me add that which strategy E would use, and which reaction G would have would depend on situational variables such as where this conversation was taking place, the possible presence of other persons, and both speakers' relative proficiencies in their second languages, as they mutually discover what these are. But I have, more than once, as a tourist in Japan, run into German tourists, and in a setting best described as linguistically irrelevant to the choice between English and German, had to make exactly this kind of decision (Burt, 1992) documents other cases of such decision-making in bilingual conversations).

That the four possible reactions to the two possible strategies do in fact occur can be documented with my own experience as a language learner and with comments from naive listeners to tape recorded conversations in which the taped speakers used the different strategies, that is, chose their first or second language (for details on the listener reactions to tapes, see Burt, 1994). If a speaker uses her interlocutor's language, she can provoke a positive reaction like (4), as in (8a), a real American listener's reaction to a taped German speaker's use of English, and as in (8b), a German listener's reaction to a taped American who uses German:

(8a) "I liked Maria, she seemed accommodating to Kay--in so far that she spoke some English to equalize the exchange.... She seemed friendly and willing to accommodate Kay by using some English. ... Maria used some English to make Kay feel better." (AMA27)[1]

(8b) "Because of her nice voice and her way of speaking I think she is a very sympath[et]ic person. My impression is that she is a very open-minded person who likes to meet new people and to learn things about other countries. She seems to be very eager to learn the language because she took the chance to speak German in the conversation with a German girl." (GFB33)[1]

Both listeners approve of the NNS trying to speak her second language.

There are also reactions of the (5) type: if someone speaks a learner's native language, this can be interpreted as an aspersion on the learner's second language ability; in (9), an American with a PhD in German reacts to the taped German speaker when she chose to use English:

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(9) "After listening to her several times, I conclude that Maria is just a bit pedantic, a bit of a German know-it-all. Her English is good, but **for a German** not **that** good. Maria is not inconsiderate or unfriendly, but there is just a hint in her tone that what she hasn't heard of isn't important. Therefore she is somewhat less genuinely interested in other people. For the above reasons, I would not walk across campus just to meet Maria. I have the feeling that she adopts English in order to try to assert her superiority, while Kay (who seems much younger) displays unspoiled curiosity about people and places." (AMA46) [emphasis in the original]

However, depending on who the interlocutor/listener is, a speaker may provoke a negative reaction if she chooses her native language. In (10a), two German listeners try politely to find an explanation for an American bilingual's perhaps unexpected use of English:

(10a) "she doesn't continue speaking German...maybe that's because she hasn't enough self-confidence." (GFA27)
"although she had the chance to talk in German to Maria, Kay always got back to English and it looked like she wouldn't feel very comfortable with her German..." (GMA23)

But in (10b), an American listener harshly criticizes that same American for not speaking German.

(10b) "I felt that she was a bit rude because she didn't ask if Maria could speak English before she (Kay) started describing Urbana's location. ...Her reverting to English very early on in the conversation makes me feel that she wasn't trying very hard (& her majoring in German makes this more inexcusable)." (AMA27)

For the last category, the positive reaction from a NNS who is pleased and excited to be speaking with a real NS, I do not have examples from the listener reactions to the tapes but I do have two anecdotes from my own experiences as a language learner. The first comes from a trip to Japan. When I arrived at Osaka airport I impulsively greeted the customs official in Japanese. He proceeded to ask me in Japanese where I would be staying, for how long, for what purpose, and whether I was bringing in any tobacco products. I managed to tell him in Japanese that I was staying in Kobe, for one week, to attend a conference, and that I don't smoke. The entire interview was in Japanese, and I was very pleased.

Similarly, a few years ago, on my way back from a conference in Finland, on an early morning flight from the north of the country to Helsinki, the Finnair flight attendant offered drinks--which on Finnair flights, one must pay for. I asked:

(11) SMB: Onko teillä appelsiinimehua? (Do you have orange juice?)
Flt. att.: Viisi markkaa. (Five marks.)

I gave her five Finnmarks and got my orange juice, and was again extremely pleased with myself all the way back to Chicago.

In both cases I found it very accommodating of the native speakers to be willing to humor me. But native speakers really can't know in advance how a NNS will react. Neither strategy is failsafe, in terms of the reaction it may provoke; both strategies--choosing your own language, and choosing the interlocutor's language--can provoke either a positive or a negative interpretation and reaction, and in this sense, they are both sociopragmatically ambiguous.

The explanation for this sociopragmatic ambiguity of code choice is to be found in the Markedness Model for code choice developed in Myers-Scotton (1993a, 1993b) and Scotton (1983). Basic to this model is the Negotiation Principle (NP), analogous to the Cooperative Principle (CP) of Grice (1975). The Negotiation Principle is given in (12):

(12) Negotiation Principle: "Choose the form of your conversational contribution such that it symbolizes the set of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between speaker and addressee for the current exchange." (Scotton, 1983, p. 116).

Thus, forms, specifically codes, are linked with sets of rights and obligations, or RO sets. The linking of codes or forms with RO sets will, of course, be specific to the speech community, but the phenomenon of some link or other is potentially universal (Scotton's framework fits well with the notion of universal vs. parochial pragmatics of Green (1990)). For example, in a multilingual society, the type for which Myers-Scotton developed this model, one language might be associated with the family, and thus index an intimate, familial set of rights and obligations between participants, while another would index relationships throughout the wider, multi-ethnic society. Certain codes are considered marked or unmarked for certain situations. For example, Myers-Scotton notes that for interethnic conversations in Kenya, Swahili is the unmarked code (Myers-Scotton, 1993a, p. 477). However, markedness is both dynamic, that is, subject to change as the situation changes, and gradient, in that "one code choice (or sometimes more) is more unmarked than others for a given RO set." (Myers-Scotton, 1993a, p. 477).

Speakers may choose to try to change the type of interaction by changing the RO set by switching codes. For example, Myers-Scotton tells of a storekeeper who speaks to his sister in the lingua franca of the area, Swahili, after she has come into his store, even though she attempts to use their home language, Lwidakho, to define the situation as a family rather than commercial one--and thus, to get some free groceries. In other words, he changes the operative RO set by changing codes (Myers-Scotton, 1993b, pp. 144-145).

Within this general framework, Gricean-style maxims mediate the choice of codes. For example, the maxim that allows for the changing of codes in the grocery store situation is the Marked Choice Maxim, given in (13):

(13) Make a marked code choice which is not the unmarked index of the unmarked RO set in an interaction when you wish to establish a new RO set as unmarked for the current exchange. (Myers-Scotton, 1993b, p. 131)

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It can be seen that this is what the storekeeper did--he changed from the familial code to the pan-ethnic, commercial code, and thus changed the operative RO set. Myers-Scotton has proposed a number of submaxims of code choice, but we will make use of two given in (14):

(14) *The Deference Maxim*: Show deference in your code choice to those from whom you desire something (Scotton, 1983, p. 123).

The Virtuosity Maxim: Make an otherwise marked choice whenever the linguistic ability of either S(peaker) or A(ddressee) makes the unmarked choice for the unmarked RO set in a conventionalized exchange infelicitous. (Scotton, 1983, p. 125).

Myers-Scotton's phrasing for the deference maxim makes it sound as if anyone speaking the interlocutor's code is after free groceries, but it need not be that--a speaker may "want" from an interlocutor merely to know the time of day, a quick hello, acceptance as a speaker of her second language, or the pleasure of conversation, in other words, a social rather than material "something."

It can be seen that in an intercultural conversation, these maxims allow inferences that lead to the reactions characterized in (4) through (7) above. If E speaks German to G, and G interprets this action as in accordance with the Deference maxim, G may conclude that E is showing deference to her, and react as in (4). If, however, E speaks German to G and G interprets this as an action in accord with the Virtuosity maxim, her reaction will look more like (5), because she will be quite justified in drawing the inference that E is speaking German because G's English seems not to be quite good enough.

Similarly, if E speaks English to G, G may conclude that E is choosing not to follow the Virtuosity maxim, probably because G's English is good enough, and G's reaction of type (6) is justified. But if E speaks English and G interprets that as a failure to follow the Deference maxim, she will be quite justified in reacting as in (7). Myers-Scotton's maxims are so constructed that in an intercultural conversation between learners, an act of code choice is interpretable as following from either of the maxims, or as flouting them both. If E speaks German to G, G may interpret this action as in accord with either Deference or Virtuosity. Both maxims point the speaker in the same direction: the speaker chooses the interlocutor's code by following either one; thus, the interlocutor does not know why the speaker made the choice she did. Similarly, a speaker may choose her own language and thus flout either maxim--and again, the interlocutor may not know which maxim the speaker intended to flout. This type of relationship between maxims, where each leads to the same linguistic choice, I would like to call a *confluence* of maxims. A confluence is different from a flout, violation, clash or opting out (Grice, 1975), in that both maxims enjoin the same linguistic behavior. On the other hand, when two maxims are both flouted, the result is a *double-flout*. As long as two or more maxims point a speaker in the direction of the same marked choice, a confluence or double-flout of maxims is possible--and it is this confluence or double-flout that results in sociopragmatic ambiguity.

Sociopragmatic ambiguity might seem to be classifiable as a type of pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983), if "H perceives S's utterance as ambivalent where S intended no

ambivalence" (Thomas, 1983, p. 94). However, in the case with code choice, hearers do not always perceive an ambivalence on the part of speakers, as shown by examples (9) and (10b) above; rather, they perceive and focus on a single intention ("she's speaking English because my German isn't good enough"), may not notice the existence of a second possible intention ("she's speaking English in order to try to be polite to me"), and may then proceed to think the worst of their interlocutor. The pragmatic failure, if it is such, does not arise because of a perceived ambivalence, but because the hearer has perceived only one meaning of a genuinely sociopragmatically ambiguous linguistic choice on the part of the speaker.

Sociopragmatic ambiguity might also seem to fit Thomas's (1983) category of sociopragmatic failure, which "stems from cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior" (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). Thomas gives examples of sociopragmatic failure as stemming from a speaker's (usually a NNS's) different assessment of 1) the size of imposition involved, 2) cultural taboos, 3) power and social distance, or 4) value judgements ("pragmatic ground rules" and the relation between pragmatic principles). These explanations all concern knowledge of the particular culture that the learner is trying to interact in, such as "when or for what services it is appropriate to thank" (Thomas, 1983, p. 109), knowledge that the learner has not yet acquired.

The sociopragmatic ambiguity of code choice, at least, arises from a different kind of lack of knowledge--not a lack of knowledge of the culture involved, but a lack of knowledge of the intentions and motivations of the individual interlocutor. It is not so much a case of the speaker failing to understand something about her target language or culture, but rather a situation where one really cannot tell in advance what the intentions and motivations (and hence, reactions) of one's interlocutor will be, since these are not culturally determined. As shown above, these intentions, motivations and reactions are not predictable: some Americans will want to speak German, while others will hope to avoid such an experience. Furthermore, the reasons behind an individual's code choice preference will arise out of situation-specific intentions; this is the point behind Scotton's Marked Choice Maxim. Thus, if sociopragmatic ambiguity is a type of sociopragmatic failure (a label I am reluctant to apply, since the fault seems to lie in the situation, rather than with the speakers), it comes about because of a reason different from those Thomas has identified.

THE SOCIOPRAGMATIC AMBIGUITY OF PRONOUN CHOICE

Let us turn now to the second example of SPA, the choice of address pronouns in languages, unlike modern English, where there is a choice. This is a well-researched, familiar topic, and I will only skim the surface. However, I hope to show that the Gricean-Scottonian mechanism used in analyzing the code choice example is also applicable here; Myers-Scotton's framework allows an explanation for the ambiguity of pronoun choice through maxim confluence. The value of this explanation is that it brings into the Gricean fold a familiar phemonenon which has not been analyzed before in terms of maxim interaction.

In the seminal works on this topic, Brown and Gilman (1960) and Gilman and Brown (1958) demonstrate the sociopragmatic ambiguity of second person pronouns in their two

commonest variants--at least in European languages--what they call the T and V pronouns (see also Brown and Ford (1961) and Braun (1988) on the broader topic of address terms in general). The V pronoun (as in French *vous*, German *Sie*, etc.) usually conveys either respect or social distance or both. Speakers use V to address teachers or other high status persons, including, in some families, parents (Lambert and Tucker, 1976). V is also used to address equal status adults to whom one does not feel particularly close. The T pronoun (e.g French *tu*, German *du*, etc.) conveys either intimacy or status/age inferiority on the part of the addressee relative to the speaker--or both. Speakers use T to address children, most animals (but apparently not police dogs), close friends, and, in German, usually, and in many families in French-speaking countries, parents (Lambert and Tucker, 1976). What is crucial here is the fact that while the V form has a positive interpretation in terms of status, it implies social distance--a possible negative; similarly, while the T form can convey warmth and intimacy, it can also convey an uncomfortable status difference between participants, with the recipient of T in a lower-status position. While symmetrical pronoun usage is generally expected, according to Brown and Gilman--people either say T or V to each other--still asymmetrical uses do exist, as Lambert and Tucker (1976) and Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) have shown--where one party says V and is addressed as T. The potential therefore exists that a unilateral change from V to T could indicate the wish for either a new symmetrical or a new asymmetrical relationship. A change from T to V could indicate a sudden realization of status difference that should be recognized or a distancing from the interlocutor.[2] For example, I've had the experience of having a German exchange student address me as *du*, assuming that I was a fellow student, then suddenly realize that I was a professor, and address me as *Sie*. If we had known each other for longer, her sudden switch of pronoun forms might have hurt my feelings, because it could have been interpreted as her wanting to distance herself from me. Thus, the V form has the potential for SPA, in that it allows two very different inferences about the speaker's perception of her relationship to the hearer.

The T form can also be ambiguous. While living in Germany in my early twenties, I had the opportunity to attend a German Quaker meeting a few times. A very old, dignified, learned and serious German Quaker gentleman addressed me as *du*. While I realized that this was probably just like the now-defunct practice of English-speaking Quakers of using *thee*, it also seemed possible to me that the use of *du* was intended to index our vast age difference. In any case, I could not believe that I was supposed to reciprocate and call this person *du*. I was very uncomfortable with this ambiguity, and retreated to using impersonal sentences in my dealings with the German Quakers.

Howell and Klassen (1971) give another example of a situation in which pronoun choice can result in SPA. The German-speaking Mennonites of Herschel, Saskatchewan are a community of immigrants from two different places, Danzig and the Ukraine. Each subcommunity has a different norm for pronoun choice, with the Danzigers using symmetrical, and the Ukrainians asymmetrical patterns. In a speech community like this one, where two different norms are available, the possibilities for SPA are obvious. A speaker may switch from *Sie* to *du* (it must be an older speaker who initiates such a switch); the hearer may be in doubt as to whether the switch indexes a move towards closer friendship, in accord with the symmetrical pattern, or if what is indexed is that the speaker is in some way asserting his higher status, in accord with the asymmetrical pattern. A switch from *du*

to *Sie* would have the possibilities for double interpretation that I encountered when the German exchange student initiated that same switch with me, either a sudden realization that deference should be paid, or a desire for increased social distance.

Within Myers-Scotton's framework, maxims can be constructed to explain this sociopragmatic ambiguity of pronoun choice.

(15) *Social Distance*: Choose the marked form of the second person pronoun (or other form of address) when you wish to change the social distance between you and the interlocutor.

Status: Choose the marked form of the second person pronoun (or other form of address) when you wish to change the status relationship between you and your interlocutor.

The maxims of (15) would follow naturally from the Marked Choice Maxim of Myers-Scotton (1993b, p. 131), given in (13) above.

A change in address pronoun from expected V to T (as by the German Quaker) can be interpreted as following from the Social Distance maxim, in which case, it indexes a move towards greater intimacy or friendship (this can happen, by the way, without a formal ceremony). But that same pronoun switch can also be interpreted as following from the Status maxim, in which case it indexes an assertion of status superiority on the part of the speaker with respect to the addressee. Both maxims enjoin the same linguistic behavior, but for clearly different reasons--another case of maxim confluence.

Similarly, the move from T to V can be described as a case of confluence. A speaker can change to V to index respect for a high status addressee, as the German exchange student no doubt intended (at least I hope so), following the Status maxim. But the same move can be interpreted as following from the Social Distance maxim, and as indexing the speaker's wish to put increased distance between herself and the addressee, with whom she was previously friendly. I am told by a native speaker of German that such a move is rare, and devastating, but it is possible. Again, both maxims steer the speaker towards the same linguistic choice, but with different sociopragmatic reasons; this is another case of confluence.

Thus, for pronoun choice, as with code choice, sociopragmatic ambiguity arises because two maxims guide the speaker to make the same linguistic choice; the reason for SPA is maxim confluence.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND A QUESTION OR TWO

Sociopragmatic ambiguity in code choice and in address pronoun choice, two cases which, at first glance, seem to have little to do with each other, are shown within a system of markedness and negotiation to arise from the same cause, i.e., from a confluence of maxims that direct the choice of code or of form, or from a double-flout of maxims. In

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confluence, two maxims enjoin the speaker to choose the same form; as the hearer perceives the forms, she may not be able to decide which of the two possible maxims motivated its choice. In a double-flout, the choice of a linguistic form implies that two maxims have been flouted; SPA arises because this double-flouting allows at least two possible inferences by the hearer.

In introducing the notion of pragmatic confluence, we encounter another question. Is confluence a possible interaction between the original Gricean maxims as well as between those maxims following from the Negotiation Principle of Myers-Scotton? Since Grice's original maxims guide the speaker towards more expected, or unmarked behavior, a confluence between them would not be particularly noticeable. This is why confluence has not seemed like a necessary notion until now. Consider Grice's example of speaker A asking B how their mutual acquaintance C likes his new job, and B's reply: "Oh, quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet." (Grice, 1975, p. 43) The reply flouts not only Relevance, but Quantity as well (we don't really find out much about C's new job). This reply, in fact a double-flout, is unexpected (and therefore worthy of remark). If B had instead followed both Relevance and Quantity--a case of confluence, the reply would have been something more expected (and less marked), such as, "Oh fine, he likes his colleagues and the work is interesting." Because of the nature of Grice's maxims, this case of maxim confluence does not result in sociopragmatic ambiguity. While sociopragmatic ambiguity can arise from either confluence of Scotton's maxims or a double-flout, a confluence of Grice's maxims does not seem to produce SPA.

A double-flout of Scotton's maxims can also cause SPA, whereas a double-flout of Grice's maxims produces implicature, of course; is it possible to see SPA, therefore, as merely another form of implicature? I think we must hold the two phenomena distinct, because of the peculiar nature of confluence: if SPA is a subset of implicature, then some cases of it are caused by confluence (between Scotton's maxims), while other cases of confluence (between Grice's maxims) fail to cause implicature. This embarrassing contradiction does not arise, if we keep SPA as a category distinct from implicature (though we are left with the embarrassment that double-flouting results in some cases in implicature, and in others, SPA).

Scotton's maxims are different from Grice's, in that hers direct the speaker towards marked behavior--hence, the marked behavior and its accompanying SPA are more salient. The introduction of markedness into Gricean pragmatics has enriched the framework by expanding the type and function of maxims in the Gricean system, and has opened up new possibilities for the interpretation of linguistic behavior and for the interaction of maxims.

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NOTES

[1]Subjects are designated by nationality (American or German), sex (F or M), by the taped conversation they heard (A or B), and by age (the number following the three letters).

[2]Notice that the potential for sociopragmatic ambiguity in this case has nothing to do with differences between cultures, but rather, exists within a single language system (or several such), so that Thomas's notion of pragmatic failure is not applicable here.

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